

CHERRY TREE NURSERY OPEN DAY NEWS

7th, 8th & 9th JULY 2011

We would like to welcome everyone to our 2011 Open Days and to thank you all for your support and interest.

April 2011 marked Cherry Tree's 21st birthday, a very appropriate year for work to start on our wonderful new sustainable building programme. This was made possible by Bournemouth Borough Council's generous grant of a 21-year lease, and by some magnificent donations from our many friends and supporters.

Progress on the building has been very good and we are all full of excitement and enthusiasm about the results. More detailed information on the buildings is available today, and we are hoping the Open Days will mark the start of our fundraising for the next phase. We would like to record our thanks to all the staff of the Dorset Centre for Rural Skills who could not have been more kind and helpful, and who have rapidly become part of the Cherry Tree community.

Work started in April, and hopefully the building will be completed in August. At the end of May we performed the very important "Topping Out" ceremony to celebrate reaching the topmost point of the building, to thank the forest for the wood, and to bless the building. A barbecue cooked for us by the Rotary Club of Westbourne crowned the event.

It was very important to us to keep a photographic record of the progress of the building work. We have been extremely fortunate to have the help of two volunteer photographers, Madeleine Hooper and Newton Oliveira. Newton has also produced some fantastic 'stop animations' of the building work – check them out on Cherry Tree's Facebook page!

Everyone was very sad at having to lose our white poplar tree, which had to be cut down to make room for the buildings, but we were very glad to be able to take part in the planting of three oak trees on Vicarage Field. We have also been working in partnership with Bournemouth Borough Council in their plans for a wildlife garden at Hengistbury Head. Our own wildlife pond now has more newts, frogs, bees and butterflies than ever.

A great sadness for everyone at the Nursery was the passing of long-term volunteer, Tim Boswell, who had been with us since the beginning and who is remembered with great love. We had a beautiful gathering to remember him and are enjoying regular contact with his mum, Olive.

The life and work of the nursery since April has completely centred round the building work, which has had an effect on everything we do. For example, it meant we could not have a Potathon this year, or the SWOP barbecue when Chestnut Nursery volunteers join us for a joint party.

It will also have had an effect on you, our customers and friends, and we apologise for any delays or disruption you may have experienced. We hope that the much restricted space and lack of seating area will not spoil your enjoyment of the Open Days.

Another major achievement for our 21st year was our being chosen as Wessex Charity of the Year, at a ceremony attended by a large group of volunteers. This highly prestigious award provided a great boost to everyone's morale. We also won the Co-operative Community Partnership Scheme Award for Wiltshire and Dorset, as well as the Ellingham Show Nurseries Cup and the Bournemouth in Bloom Award for Improved Horticultural Project.

On 28th June we were joined by an extremely well-organised team of 55 workers from LV= (Liverpool Victoria) who varnished benches, painted and replaced gates, dug up bamboo, potted, filled in holes in the drive, replaced paving slabs, and weeded the sales area and stock bed among other things. A fantastic day was had by all and we sent the team our grateful thanks.

We also benefit from an excellent relationship with JP Morgan Chase. We held a successful plant sale on their premises in June. We have also had our annual stall at the Stanbridge Mill Open Day, and will be selling plants, and having a children's event, at the Bournemouth Family Festival in Meyrick Park on July 28th. We will be at the Ellingham Show as usual, but sadly the Stour Valley Festival has been cancelled this year. Many thanks to plantswoman, Helga Aldersey, for opening her lovely garden in Talbot Woods in aid of Cherry Tree.

The latest figures from MIND suggest that 300 out of every 1,000 people (30% of the population) will experience a mental health problem in any year, most commonly anxiety and depression. Psychotic illnesses are much less common (2 in 1,000) but still increasing. 1.5 million people in the UK have an eating disorder, 29% of all adults (34% of women) experience sleep problems and 30% of mental health patients say that their GP is unaware of what services are available to support their recovery.

Unfortunately the recent cuts in mental health services have had a drastic result for us in the increasing need and demand for places at Cherry Tree. We currently have 158 people on our books. Between January and May 2011 we received 42 referrals. In the same period 18 new volunteers (and 9 new friends) started work at Cherry Tree and 15 moved on – 3 of these into horticultural employment.

The other factor having a severe effect on the mental health of our volunteer group, leading to increased stress, anxiety and cases of relapse is the complete overhaul of the Benefits System, which means everyone who is on benefits due to health problems is having to have a medical examination under threat of having to return to work, in many cases before they are ready to do so. It seems it is always the most neglected and vulnerable who have to suffer.

We continue to give talks and presentations and to invite groups to visit, as part of our commitment to tackling the stigma and discrimination still experienced by the mentally ill. The schools project also continues.

Volunteers have been on their annual caravan holiday in Weymouth, the highlight being a fishing trip by boat, and are currently planning their annual Bob Anderson camping trip. They participated in the Santa Fun Run in December and went on a sponsored walk at Abbotsbury Swannery in June, as well as organising a sponsored walk themselves, which raised over £2,500 for the new buildings.

The Annual Harry Roffey Day trip took an unusual form this year as volunteers fulfilled a long-time wish for a combined trip on the Watercress Line and the Basingstoke Canal. They reported that they had a wonderfully relaxing day.

Other outings enjoyed have included a walk in the New Forest, boat trips courtesy of Dolphin, a visit to a bluebell wood, a visit to the Green Energy Centre and a trip to Adam Slatter's Carpentry workshop to see the A-frames of the new building under construction. Volunteers also appreciated a visit to Diana Guy's garden and are looking forward to a resumption of her

horticultural classes once the building work is finished. One World Week is scheduled again for 17th to 21st October.

Over the winter we completed a major construction project, made essential by the building works, to expand the area of our car park. We reorganised the pathways between the beds in the nursery so as not to lose any plant standing-out space.

We also made progress with the most urgent path replacements under the Safer Paths project. Three paths were laid down to concrete. Another essential winter undertaking was to re-skin and refurbish the woodwork of two polytunnels.

Not being able to have a Potathon allowed us to have more gradual and measured production rather than the intensive one-day extravaganza. Unfortunately we have had to put our plant prices up at the beginning of 2011 in response to increased costs. We also continue to review the varieties we grow, taking on new varieties trialled last year, and stopping growing the poorest sellers.

We have started incorporating a new form of biological control for vine weevil into our compost. This is a soil-based predatory fungus called Met 52 which does not harm any other form of life, especially not bees!

The Spring Plant Sale was our most successful sale ever, by a wide margin, and made us realise that we had a shortage of trolleys, as well as space!

We have been very lucky to have Josh, a marketing student, with us for six weeks. He has been a great help, promoting our plants. Brian Hardiman of FR Aviation has been kind enough to give us a third milk float, which was delivered by our friends at Forge Garage in Winton who also ran a stall at Winton Carnival for us. We were also given a polytunnel, a building and a shed when Bluebell Nursery at the Addington Unit closed, which were dismantled for us by the Groundworks project and await re-erection!

We cannot produce a newsletter without a mention of our wonderful new product 'Cherry Tree Nursery Gardener's Hand Cream' designed by Cherry Tree volunteers with the help of our very special herbalist, Catherine Marshall.

We are launching our new Forklift Truck appeal at the Open Day this year. We use 75 tons of compost a year, which all has to be unloaded from lorries and moved around the site by hand, which is presenting Health & Safety problems. We are looking at a Calor Gas powered version to keep our carbon footprint low.

The charity SWOP now has a new Treasurer, Roy Edgley, and two new Trustees, June Perryman and Vic Williams. Conor Burns MP visited in the spring and had a long discussion with volunteers. We have just had a visit from our Tasmanian branch!

We want to thank everyone who has helped us in 2011, and over the last twenty-one years, especially all our loyal customers who keep on coming back. We would like to mention the Albert Hunt Trust, the Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Foundation, Allis Merlo Pro-Am Golf, the Archer Trust, Inge Axt-Simmonds, Richard Bagley, the Baroness Maddock, Miss Jean Bisgood, Bournemouth Borough Council, Bournemouth Community Chest, Breeze Events, Miss Sylvia Bowditch, the Brushett family, Edward Byrne Will Trust, Co-operative Partnerships, Corfe Hills School, Dorset Business Awards 2010, Dorset Healthcare NHS University Foundation Trust, Douch Group, Richard Drax MP, East Dorset Housing, Ferndown United Reform Church, Garfield Weston Foundation, George Fry, Higos Insurance

Services, The Holdenhurst Charity, Incorporated Bournemouth Free Church Council, Jay's Fish and Chips, Arthur and Doreen King, the Kinson Conservative Sunday Lunch Club, Kinson Lodge, Kinson Tyres, the Lampard family, Leonard Laity Stoate Charitable Trust, Margaret Levinson, Iris Leppard, Linmardon Trust, the Lodge of Expiation, Masons of Hampshire & IOW, the Mercer's Company, the Penny Serenaders, the Pitt-Rivers Charitable Trust, Rick Raumann, Rank Foundation, Redhill TWG, Ida Roffey, the Rotary Club of Bournemouth North, Rowena Lodge, the Saunders family, Selwood Charitable Trust, Sembcorp Bournemouth Water Ltd, Mrs Pamela Shrubbs, Doreen Stewart, St George's Methodist Church, St Michael's Lodge, the staff of the Stour Valley Local Nature Reserve, Sundt & Co., the Talbot Village Trust, the Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, and Valentine Charitable Trust, who have all made substantial contributions to keep our ever more badly needed work going.

Our love and thanks to all of you who have contributed in any way to our project.

There was a notice rescued from the old tearoom before it was demolished which now features in the photographic record of the building works. It reads:

“Those that sow kindness harvest love”.